



**NEWS RELEASE
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Reduction of short-term parking rates represents “municipal stimulus” for downtown businesses

(Calgary, AB) – In a letter sent to City Council, the Calgary Chamber of Commerce offered support for Alderman Mar’s June 22, 2009 motion to reduce on-street parking fees by 25 per cent.

“Given challenging economic conditions, City Council should do all that it can to reduce the tax and fee burden on Calgarians,” said Heather Douglas, President & CEO of the Calgary Chamber of Commerce.

Chamber membership surveys indicate ongoing concern with transportation and in particular with downtown parking rates. “Our members believe that rates are too high, and have become a real impediment to everyone who does business, who shops or works in the downtown core”, stated Douglas.

“Accessibility and reasonable short-term parking costs are critical to the growth and vibrancy of downtown businesses, many of whom are small and medium-sized enterprises,” commented Douglas. “High parking rates that discourage customers and clients from traveling to the core can have a damaging effect.”

As well as a roll-back of on-street rates, the Chamber urges City Council to roll-back all CPA short-stay parking rates, and consider removal of on-street parking charges for Saturdays.

“This could be viewed as a form of ‘municipal stimulus’ to make it easier for people to come downtown more often, and encourage greater business activity,” said Douglas.

Chamber members have expressed further concern about the ability of courier and delivery service vehicles to access short-term parking.

“We welcome the parking review currently underway and the potential for more loading zones and easily accessible loading docks in the downtown core,” stated Douglas. “Alternatively, an exemption for courier and delivery vehicles would ensure service companies have access to this critical area of the city’s business community.”

Finally, the Chamber urges a stronger commitment to improving transit capacity.

“Increasing parking rates have been a conscious decision to encourage alternative modes of transportation such as transit, walking and cycling,” said Douglas. “City Council can only justify increasing parking rates, however, if the revenues derived are directed to improving transit services, ensuring that Calgarians continue to have choice.”



The letter to City Council is available at the Chamber's website: www.calgarychamber.com

About the Chamber

The Calgary Chamber of Commerce is a member-driven, sustainable organization whose mission is to connect, serve and champion the Calgary business community in its quest to excel.

The Public & Government Affairs Department measurably contributes to the Chamber's profile and effectiveness as the leading edge business advocate and forum for debate, and a credible source for policy analysis and issue commentary that advocates new and innovative solutions to improve the business climate on behalf of our members.

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